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722
Rojas, still resided in Mexico City and refused to return for fear of attack by the 794
revolutionaries. During his absence some of his functions were carried on by [793]
rezanderos, laymen who knew from memory a great number of prayers for different [182]
occasions, such as for a dying man, a difficult delivery, the reappearance of lost or
stolen articles, good crops, avoiding arguments in the family, keeping the husband
from drinking too much, and so on. The *rezanderos* were kept busy in those dif
ficult days and earned a comfortable income.

In the absence of the regular priest, a young priest was sent to the village in 1919. [793]
He energetically set about to put the church in order. He appointed new *mayor*
domos of the *cofradías*, a new leader of the Asociación de la Divina Providencia,
and a church *cantor*. But Tepoztecans seemed to have forgotten Catholic practices [783]
during the Revolution, and hardly anyone went to confession or Mass—despite the [796]
exhortations and threats of the Father.

The only practice the villagers still conscientiously clung to was baptism, and 608
they were eager to baptize the children born during the Revolution. To get the 794
people to attend church once more, the priest refused to baptize any child until the 795
godparents were confessed. But Tepoztecans had forgotten the prayers and the [783]
formalities of confession and were afraid and embarrassed to appear before the
priest. As a result, they were unwilling to become godparents. Parents were then
forced to ask the few *rezanderos* who had kept their connections with the church
to be the *padrinos* of their children. These men eventually monopolized the god-
parentage of the village and even came to charge for this service. One *rezandero*
had about one hundred godchildren. Needless to say, the *rezanderos* were unable
and unwilling to fulfill their obligations as godfathers, and scarcely recognized
their godchildren. The parents considered the original godparent of their choice as
the true godparent, rather than the *padrinos rezanderos* who were forced upon
them.

When the village was more peaceful the regular priest returned with some of 794
the *cacique* families, and religious life became normal once again—but without its [793]
former splendor. Fiestas were again celebrated, the popular Carnaval again held. [795]
The ban against baptism without confession was lifted and anyone might serve
as godparent.

But the new tranquillity was soon to be shattered, this time by the Catholic
Church which feared restraining measures of the post-revolutionary government.
The church adopted a policy of non-cooperation and active resistance. On July 31,
1926, the archbishop of Mexico ordered all priests to leave the churches and to
cease public religious services. Faithful Catholics were called upon to withdraw
their children from the public schools to protect them from "socialist teaching."
Priests were instructed to give Mass and to administer the sacraments in a clandes-
tine manner.

In Tepoztlán these church orders resulted in the priest's once again leaving for [793]
Mexico City, and religious activity waned. The most important prayers and cere- [796]
monies were conducted secretly by one of the more able *rezanderos*, Don Francisco

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Carmen is used widely in the village because of the numerous virtues attributed to it. It is useful to frighten away devils and other fear-inspiring beings. It also saves lives by deflecting bullets or machetes. If carried at the time of death, it insures the possibility of "dying well" and the certainty that the Virgen del Carmen will soon remove the soul from purgatory. For these reasons approximately three hundred men, women, and children customarily carry this scapulary.

e) Sagrado Corazón de Jesús celebrates Mass on the first Friday of each month in homage to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Again membership consists of thirty women. This association is considered most powerful because its members are "the best women in the village." The present president is the priest's sister.

f) Asociación de la Adoración Nocturna is made up exclusively of men. The forty members are obliged to confess each month and keep vigil all night of the first Saturday of each month, praying and giving praise to the Holy One. On the following Sunday each member takes communion. However, this society scarcely functions because the majority of the members refuse to fulfill the requirement of confession.

g) Acción Católica de Jóvenes Mexicanos consists of two sections, one for each of the sexes. There are about eighty youths and thirty girls in the organization. The members work to arouse the religious spirit of the people, to organize fiestas to raise funds, and to attract the youth to join. Under the stimulation of the nuns this organization has become extremely active. For the first time, young Tepoztecans have manifested a militant Catholicism of a modern type and have become interested in understanding the religious dogma and in recruiting new members. It is also the only religious association which has a sense of solidarity and imposes mutual obligations upon its members. Members visit each other when ill, celebrate each other's birthdays, and attend weddings and funerals.

h) Vanguardia is an association for children from seven to fourteen years of age. They are required to attend Mass, to confess, and to take communion every Sunday. Membership varies considerably during the year.

Other associations which function only once or twice a year also exist. Some of these are the Hermandád de las Ánimas which celebrates All Saints' Day on November first, the Sociedád de la Virgen de la Natividad which is in charge of preparations for the fiesta of the patron of the village on September eighth. Before the Revolution there was an Asociación de Caridad called San Vicente de Paul which distributed food and clothing to the poor. The society disappeared during the Revolution and was never reorganized.

(5) The *mayordomos,* religious leaders of the barrios, are important functionaries in connection with religious fiestas. They decide how the fiesta is to be celebrated, whether or not to have Mass sung, or to have a sermon, or to invite additional priests, and so on. They arrange for all these services, for the band of musicians, for fireworks, and for whatever else they decide to have. They frequently must spend their own funds to produce a successful fiesta. They also generally serve *mole* and tamales and *ponche* to large numbers of people.

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Tepoztecans do not like to confess; the majority do so only once a year. Not giving much importance to sin, Tepoztecans do not regard confession as necessary. Most men consider confession important only when one is about to die but "with the pangs of death, who's going to remember to confess properly?" Women, particularly married women, are less reluctant to confess, and about fifty women are known to take communion and confess quite often. Through the Acción Católica the number of young people of both sexes who do this has increased. Perhaps the most important deterrent to confession, especially among the older people, is that the priest may exact from the confessor the recitation of certain prayers which most people cannot say accurately. Fearing a scolding from the priest, they prefer to avoid the situation. There is no such difficulty with communion. "We would all take communion more often if we didn't have to confess; that we always avoid."

In general, the Tepoztecan feels obliged to contribute to the church and does so by paying *limosnas*. There is a belief that he who refuses to give alms will find that no one receives his soul in heaven and that therefore he must go to hell. He who always gives alms finds that when he dies and his soul goes to heaven, "the Saint to whom he has given alms comes to receive the soul and intercedes with God to allow him to enter, and so he gets to heaven." Thus, when a Tepoztecan lights a candle to some saint or deposits a coin or two in the box, he considers himself deserving of the protection of that saint.

Tithes, which were obligatory and were collected by the government for the church before the Revolution, no longer exist. The local priest, however, hires a *limosnero* at harvest time to go about the fields, riding on a mule, to collect contributions from the farmers. As a rule, each farmer gives about twelve ears of corn, so that the priest collects a good amount for his stores.

Religious beliefs in Tepoztlán reflect Tepoztecan social character and world view. The profoundly practical nature of Tepoztecans precludes religious fantasy, mysticism, and any preoccupation with metaphysics; they seek from religion concrete solutions to problems of daily life and go about it in as direct a manner as their religion permits. Their religious world, like the world in which they live, is full of hostile forces and punishing figures which must be propitiated to secure good will and protection. The act of propitiation is direct and simple, consisting of giving something or doing something which is known to please a particular saint, such as lighting a candle, giving a few coins, offering flowers, burning incense, reciting a special prayer, or performing a certain dance; these offerings incur an obligation on the part of the recipient to favor the donor.

As in most mestizo communities in Mexico and Central America, Tepoztecan religious beliefs represent a fusion of Catholic and pagan elements. The people's concept of God is vague at best; the one characteristic which is clear to Tepoztecans is that he is a punishing God who acts in ways hostile to men. Most misfortunes are ascribed to him; good fortune rarely.

The Holy Trinity is viewed as consisting of three distinct gods. One is God the Father, who is usually pictured with a long, white beard and a large ball in his

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each of the barrios, as well as of some of the villages, are appealed to for rain. All the images are shut up in the parish church and are taken out in procession only in the afternoon when the sun is high, so that the images will feel the heat and notice the people's discomfort and sadness.

The saints with greater punishing powers are most assiduously worshipped. Saint Peter, of the barrio of San Pedro, is one of these. If there are not enough dancers at his feast day, he brings illness and misfortune to those who did not participate. Saint Peter, whose image is accompanied by a lion, is said to use this animal to frighten children into dancing for him and sometimes to appear to a father who has refused to permit his children to dance. It is also believed that if a person does not accept the office of *mayordomo* of the barrio of San Pedro, the lion will be sent to frighten him.

In their view of the saints, Tepoztecans reveal a tendency toward polytheism. This is indicated in the distinct attitudes toward the different images of the same saint. For example, the various local figures of Christ do not all have equal powers and are not all worshipped with equal fervor. The Christ of Ixcatepec is considered "very miraculous" and is called upon when there is great misfortune, such as extreme drought. He is rendered special homage by taking children, dressed in white tunics and wearing a crown of thorns and little thorn crosses on their backs, to the chapel of Ixcatepec to do penance.

The conception of the soul will be discussed in Chapter 19, "Old Age and Death." Here it should be noted that Tepoztecans distinguish between the body, the soul, and the spirit in the following way: "The body serves us for all our needs, to satisfy our necessities," and "The soul is that which gives life to the body and which will be punished in the other life according to our sins."

When a sin is committed, "The body is not at fault, it is the soul which rules." The spirit guards the body and soul from all that is bad, it is the Guardian Angel, "like a dove, like a pigeon, but invisible." The spirit is the companion of the soul and gives it strength. "That is why when a person is not brave, he has little spirit."

The question of sin does not overly concern Tepoztecans. Sin is inevitable, for "we are all sinners." It comes as "malice" enters a person and as innocence leaves, it comes with knowledge of life, with sexuality, with loss of virginity or purity. Malice can be delayed by keeping children in ignorance, but sooner or later they will become sinners. However, sinners are differentiated according to the degree of their sin, so that there are good sinners and bad sinners.

Sins, too, vary in degree. To the Tepoztecan, lying, adultery, and failure to attend Mass, to take communion, to confess, or to celebrate feast days are without importance as sins. The Ten Commandments and other fundamental rules of conduct imposed by the Catholic Church do not control the behavior of the Tepoztecan. For him the most important sins are stealing, killing, and practicing witchcraft. These acts are also differentiated in degree of gravity.

In the case of theft there is a wide range of permissible stealing which is not considered sinful. Thus, it is no sin to steal the roof tiles, or the hearthstones, or the

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673 783 685 religious images of a temporarily abandoned house; "that is not a sin, that was abandoned, and it would be worse if it were lost." When someone's pig is run down by an automobile on the highway, the neighbors quickly come with knives and cut away the best portions of meat; this is no sin "since it is the custom of the people." But if one steals the growing corn, or corn after the harvest, or money —"that is really a great sin." Who does the stealing and from whom he steals also determine the degree of the sin. When cattle are stolen from a fellow villager it is a serious matter, cattle stolen by an outsider even more so, but cattle stolen by a Tepoztecan from a non-Tepoztecan is an act of minor importance. Thus, a young man whose father had died, and whose mother had lost most of their property to lawyers, supported himself by stealing cattle in places distant from Tepoztlán. He would go away for several weeks and return with cattle which he sold in the village or used in the fields. He is generally respected and considered *honrado*, although his actions are well known. "Since the poor fellow lost his inheritance, he sometimes goes out of Tepoztlán to struggle with the cattle of others."

While we were in the village, a highly respected person, prominent in state politics, was accused of having stolen a Zebu bull from a national experimental farm. The townspeople were impressed by his astuteness and did not take the attitude that he had done anything sinful or reprehensible.

673 783 [682] In regard to killing, Tepoztecans also distinguish between excusable and inexcusable murders. If "one is like an assassin who kills in cold blood and for mere pleasure," it is a sin. But if one kills for some purpose, it is another matter. To kill a mortal enemy without warning is not a sin since the killer "only got ahead of the dead man" and took advantage of his carelessness. The shooting of a thief or suspected thief on sight is another type of justified killing.

[683] Sorcery and witchcraft of any kind are great sins. Those who practice these "devil's arts" are certain to be punished after death, but they are left unmolested while they live and may be consulted by fellow villagers for cures or for advice in bewitching others.

[684] 562 Adultery is considered a sin only for women, but here again certain cases are excused. For example, "When a man demands good food at home and doesn't give the money to buy it, then he is forcing his wife to look for other men," and since he is the cause of the adultery or if he permits it, it is not a serious matter.

[683] 562 [273] Calumny, criticism, and gossip are special sins of women, but drunkenness on the part of men is not considered a sin.

Other beliefs held by Tepoztecans which are of interest are those of *Naguales*, *los aires*, omens, healers, witches, and sorcerers.

754 [825] The *Nagual* is a person who has the power to change into an animal, such as a dog or pig. This ancient belief is widely known in Tepoztlán but is considered to be dying out. Informants alluded to *Naguales* as beings of the past, as no longer existing, or, at least, no longer wishing to show themselves. To become a *Nagual*, one must make a pact with the devil and learn certain prayers which allow a man to turn into an animal. Other prayers take away the powers of a *Nagual* and make

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831
156 tudes toward sex and sexuality. Most of the attitudes toward sex are negative and
571 prudish and, at least superficially, in accord with Catholic tradition.

Women have a negative attitude toward bearing children. They try to keep the
842 number of pregnancies to a minimum by long nursing and by abstaining from
843 sexual intercourse. Pregnancy is commonly described as "being ill with child,"
853 and pregnant women are embarrassed by their condition and make every attempt
833 to conceal it. There is an absence of sexual play between husbands and wives;
many women refer to the sex act as "the abuse by the man," and the genitals are generally considered ugly or dirty. There is a widespread belief among adolescent
584 girls that sexual intercourse is painful. Open courtship is not sanctioned, and
562 girls are severely punished for having any relations with boys. The existence of the double standard and the greater personal freedom of boys and men tend to encourage male sexuality. Romantic love, as we conceive it, is practically unknown; romantic attachments are relatively superficial and easily made and broken. Court-
584 ship is an intriguing, exciting pastime but it is always cautious, seldom impulsive or passionate.

783 It cannot be said, however, that Tepoztecans are puritanical, nor are they burdened with feelings of guilt or concepts of sexuality as something sinful.[4] Rather, Tepoztecans place greater value upon sexual restraint than upon sexual activity; just as they do not encourage emotional expressiveness, so do they not encourage active sexuality. Adult sexual activity is discouraged, not so much for reasons of morality but for practical reasons of safety. Parents fear that a young son may make an undesirable attachment with a widow or a dangerous attachment with a married woman, or he may be bewitched by a jealous sweetheart; they fear even more strongly that their daughter will lose her good reputation and the chance of a respectable marriage. Women are generally reluctant to have sexual relations, because of unwanted pregnancies; men discourage sexuality in
837 their wives for fear of being humiliated by the wife's unfaithfulness; wives fear the loss of income and the poor treatment which inevitably attend their husband's extramarital alliances.

626 While there is much gossip, there is no ostracism or public denouncement or
831 persecution of those who are guilty of sexual indiscretion. The couple living in
588 free union is unmolested, the promiscuous widow maintains her usual relations
848 with neighbors and kin, the illegitimate child is given a similar if not entirely equal position in his mother's household and may receive aid and inheritance

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273 [4] The relative absence of guilt feelings can also be seen in the reactions to stealing and drink-
685 ing. Drinking is not considered bad in itself, but may be criticized because it takes a man away from his work and takes money which may be sorely needed for other purposes. Stealing is quite frequent and may be severely punished, but it is detection rather than the act itself which is disturbing. In case histories, informants frequently refer to little stealing episodes without
837 any manifestation of remorse or guilt, but emphasize how ashamed they were when discovered.
848 Men do not appear to have guilt in promiscuous sexual relations with women or in deceiving young girls. Rather, they are proud of these feats and consider any conquest to their credit. There is also practically no sense of moral responsibility toward children born out of wedlock.

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15 *pregnancy and birth:*

IN TEPOZTLÁN it is considered a sin for a married person not to want to have children and not to accept all those sent by God. It is said, with more or less conviction, that many children are desirable. The most frequently expressed attitude on the part of men and women concerning the advantages of raising a family is that children are a source of labor supply and security for the parents, particularly during old age. Boys are much preferred, because they are economically more productive. Although daughters aid the mother more directly than sons do, the large majority of women express strong preference for boys and favor their sons. Some younger more acculturated people occasionally express a desire to have children because it is "nice" or "less sad" not to be alone, and otherwise indicate that children are a source of emotional satisfaction. This is in contrast with most Tepoztecans, however, for whom the economic usefulness of children is the most obvious advantage in having them.

There is a notable difference in the expressed attitudes of men and women toward having children. Women for the most part "accept" children fatalistically as a burden to be endured. "Having children is our destiny and the will of God . . . it is the duty of every married woman to accept all that come." Another typical statement is the following: "There is no way out, I have a husband. If more children come, what can we do? We will endure it even though like pigs they come one after another." It is common for women to complain at having to bear many children which they believe to be a punishment of God. Women consider themselves fortunate if they do not conceive soon after marriage or after a previous birth. Most women do not want to have more than four children; those who have only one or two, or even none, are envied. Twins are considered a great misfortune.[1] A typical reaction to having twins is, "What, am I a pig to have them this way? It is a terrible punishment of God." Many women actively express interest in birth control. There is no doubt that if such information were available, and if it permitted by their husbands, a large number of women would practice birth control. Abor-

[1] A similar attitude toward twins is reported in Chan Kom. Redfield and Villa Rojas, *Chan Kom—a Maya Village* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institute, 1934), Publ. No. 448.

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COURTSHIP

Courtship before marriage is relatively new in Tepoztlán. Before the Revolution most marriages were arranged by the parents, with or without the consent of the children. Girls married at a very early age, leaving little opportunity for courtship. From the life stories of informants now in their fifties, we learn that in some cases young people did not know each other before marriage and met for the first time at the wedding ceremony in the church. Parents frequently had to threaten their young daughters with physical punishment to get them to consent to the marriage. The following excerpt from the life story of a woman, now a widow of sixty is quite typical:

584 [178]

I was eleven years old when a boy came from Gabriel Mariaca to ask for my hand. He came with his parents and a jar of silver money. But my grandmother became angry and told them I was still a child, and she didn't want to see me going about carrying babies yet. When I was twelve my mother took me home again. Then a boy of sixteen came to ask for me, and my mother said yes. She told me that she wanted me to marry before something bad happened to me. I did not want to marry, especially because I did not know who the boy was. My mother said that if I did not say yes to the priest in the church she would throw me down from the top of the church. I was afraid and did what my mother told me.

Often young people knew each other, at least by sight, but contacts were few, brief, and secretive. Being *novios* at that time meant only that the parents had made arrangements for the marriage, and the date had been set. *Novios* were not permitted to be alone together at any time before marriage. In a few better-to-do and literate families, *novios* would court secretly by exchanging love letters.

Today courtship before marriage is common. Parents lament the changing of the old ways and are concerned over the fact that boys and girls have many opportunities to become acquainted with one another, particularly at school. Indeed, it is unusual for a girl over thirteen or a boy over fifteen not to have a *novio*. The local priest has recognized this and has stated in doctrinal classes that having a *novio* is not a sin, and the girls need no longer mention it at confession. But, he added, it is a sin to be *novios* for more than six months before marriage. It is common for girls to have an initial sense of guilt in accepting their first *novio*, but this is only a fleeting reaction, and girls are much more conscious of fear than guilt.

673 [782]

There is much secrecy surrounding courtship. A girl who is found to have a *novio* is severely punished by her parents. She may be beaten, denied food, not given new clothing, and not permitted to leave the house alone for a long time thereafter. There is a great readiness among the older generation, particularly among relatives, to inform a girl's parents if they see her talking or walking with a boy, and *novios* take extra precautions not to be seen by them.

Courtship is usually initiated by the boy. Fear of refusal is very strong, and he plans his conquest carefully and proceeds slowly. The timidity of boys in approaching a girl for the first time is the subject of much joking among girls. Drinking to

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796 *Fiesta of Sixth Friday of Lent or Viernes de Dolores,* celebrated in the parish church: Fasting is required. This is the beginning of Holy Week.

[785] *Fiesta of Sábado de Dolores,* celebrated in the parish church: This is celebrated with holy offices and a Vía Crucis procession.

778 *Fiesta of Palm Sunday,* celebrated in the parish church: This is a very important holiday. Tepoztecans take palm leaves to be blessed by the priest. It is believed that blessed palm protects against lightning. Ashes of blessed palm placed upon the head are thought to cure bad headaches. Blessed palm is also placed at the door of the house to prevent fires and being struck by lightning.

[821] [755]

Fiesta of Holy Monday and Holy Tuesday, celebrated in the parish church: These are days of great devotion. The religious associations are very active, visiting the church and barrio chapels. Many Tepoztecans choose these days for their annual confession.

[783]

Fiesta of Holy Wednesday: Rigorous fasting begins. Meat is not eaten until the Saturday of Glory. Substitute foods are beans, *huauzontle, tortas,* stuffed peppers, fish, *revoltijo,* and lentils. All work must stop through the Sunday of Resurrection. Women prepare tortillas for the rest of the week. In the evening is the vigil of the Lord, the men taking turns all through the night. Women customarily go to church in the late afternoon to pray the thirty-three Credos, one for each year of Jesus' life. It is believed that those who do this will triple their earnings during the year.

[785] 262 46 [777]

Holy Thursday: The church is full on this day. The priest dramatically describes the passion of Christ, and crying on the part of women is common. Not to do so is "to have a cold heart." In the afternoon is the ceremonial foot-washing of the apostles.

[788]

Holy Friday: This is the culminating day of Holy Week. Throughout the village there is profound quietude. No one must run or shout or use bad words, so as not to offend the Lord. The men silently drink their *ponche* together while the women, dressed in black, go to church. On this day, children are not to be struck, for "it would be striking the Lord."

[861]

Holy Saturday: At 7:00 A.M. the faithful of the village and the municipio go to the church where the priest pronounces the "Gloria in Excelsis Deo." With this all the bells, which have been silent since Wednesday, are rung, and joy spreads through the village. While the bells ring, old men trim their plants so that they will produce more, mothers snip the ends of their daughter's hair to make it grow longer, and children are struck on the legs to make them grow taller. Two or three *comparsas* are organized to dance on this day.

[788] 824 826 856

Easter Sunday: Everyone dresses well and goes to Mass. Sometimes the *chinelos* leap in the afternoon. People stand in little groups in the plaza, and men drink a great deal.

535 273

April 29. *Fiesta of San Pedro,* celebrated in San Pedro: The only unusual feature of this fiesta is the group of children who dance for San Pedro.

May 1-31. All this month is dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and *rosarios* are held every afternoon. Girls from seven to fifteen years of age dress in white and bring flowers to the Virgin.

May 3. *Fiesta of Santa Cruz,* celebrated in Santa Cruz: This fiesta is celebrated not only in this barrio but in all homes and places having crosses. All crosses are adorned with flowers, especially Bougainvillaea. Incense is burned, and fireworks are set off. This fiesta is also celebrated in Ixcatepec, but is postponed until the following Sunday in deference to the barrio of Santa Cruz. It is one of the best attended fiestas. There are cockfights and visiting dancers from Yautepec and Milpa Alta.

[782] [541] [648]